

4G13.001 – Definitions

<add the following to the existing list>

Choosing By Advantages (CBA). A well-tested and widely used decision-making process the Forest Service utilizes to assess advantages for certain types of equipment used on fire and all-hazard incidents based on developed criteria. CBA is used in the development of the Dispatch Priority Lists (DPLs).

Emergency Equipment Rental Agreement. An agreement written at an incident using OF-294. The duration is for length of the incident only. An incident-only EERA is synonymous with an at-incident EERA.

Fire Equipment, Services, and Supplies Acquisition Analysis (FESSAA). A team that was formed as directed in the FY2005 Appropriations bill to study and implement improvements to acquisition practices related to fire and all-hazard incidents.

Incident Blanket Purchase Agreement (I-BPA). A preseason agreement for equipment, supplies, or services to be used on fire and all-hazard incidents, issued on an SF-1449 form. I-BPAs are awarded on a competitive basis using commercial item procedures.

Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR). A web-based Forest Service acquisition application designed to solicit, award, and manage preseason I-BPAs.

4G13.001-70 – Acronyms

<add the following to the existing list>

AVID	Agreement Vendor Identification Codes (online tool)
CBA	Choosing by Advantages
COA	Contracting Officer Assistant
CPARS	Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System
DC	Dispatch Center
DOI	Department of Interior
DPL	Dispatch Priority List
DUNS	Data Universal Numbering System
FA	Functional Administrator
FAM	Fire and Aviation Management
FESSAA	Fire Equipment, Services, and Supplies Acquisition Analysis (team)
FMMI	Financial Management Modernization Initiative
HUBZone	Historically Underutilized Business Zone
IAS	Integrated Acquisition System
I-BPA	

4G13.303-70 – Incident Blanket Purchase Agreements (I-BPAs)

- a) I-BPAs are to be solicited and issued on a competitive basis in accordance with the latest version of the National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs:
<http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/compsolplan.php> .
- i) I-BPAs are issued using the SF-1449 form, which is prescribed for use in solicitations and contracts for commercial items.
- ii) I-BPAs follow a 3-year acquisition cycle with competitive solicitation every three years.
- iii) The Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR) system shall be used to solicit, evaluate, and award all I-BPAs.
- iv) Scope of I-BPAs – I-BPAs are solicited on three primary levels as identified in the National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs.
 - 1) National – one solicitation for all regions; the criteria for selecting resources suitable for solicitation on a national level include:
 - (1) National specifications/template must be available
 - (2) Resource must be used in more than one geographic area (a broader need base is more compelling)
 - (3) Complexity such as specialized requirements
 - (4) Results of previous competitions
 - (5) Volume of use (e.g. previous expenditures).
 - 2) Regional – one solicitation in each region. Two regions can partner to issue inter-regional solicitations as appropriate.
 - 3) Local – solicitation level will vary and can be different from region to region
- v) I-BPAs are awarded using a two-step best value award process and the Choosing by Advantages (CBA) methodology to determine the dispatch priority. See <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/bestvalue.php> .
 - 1) Step one of the process entails awarding I-BPAs on a multiple award basis using competitive best value processes.
 - 2) Step two determines the dispatch priority weighing advantages for each piece of equipment, as defined by FAM, in relation to the quoted price.
- vi) A vendor may receive only one I-BPA nationwide per piece of equipment per resource category; e.g., they cannot have an agreement in one region for a resource, and have another agreement in a different region for the

- c) National solicitation templates have been established to provide consistency in the acquisition methodology, methods of hire, and equipment typing and standards throughout the Forest Service. These templates can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/solicitations.php>.
- v) The templates must be used when soliciting I-BPAs.
- vi) The templates should be used when issuing incident-only Emergency Equipment Rental Agreements (EERAs).
- vii) Changes to the boilerplate provisions of the templates as approved by the VIPR core team will be accomplished by the VIPR Functional Administrator (FA) when the need is identified.
 - 1) VIPR will automatically generate national amendments to all applicable open solicitations.
 - 2) VIPR will create a pending change for all applicable awarded agreements. These pending change(s) will be automatically incorporated into the next modification issued by the CO against that agreement.
- d) Any deviation from national policy must be approved by the WO.
 - v) Deviations from national policy will be the exception and will be considered only if the requested deviation does not adversely affect or compromise activities in other regions.
 - vi) Shall be submitted to the FESSAA team in writing via email to VIPR@fs.fed.us, with all supporting documentation for the requested deviation. See Exhibit 1 for the format to use when submitting requests.
 - vii) The FESSAA team will research the issue, and develop a recommendation for management.
 - viii) The deviation must be approved by both National FAM and AQM before it can be granted.
 - ix) If denied, the Region will be given the complete rationale in writing.
 - x) The joint FAM/AQM decision is final.
- e) When evaluating responses on I-BPA solicitations, Contracting Officers must use past performance as a best value factor.

- v) Past performance information can be found in the Past Performance Information Retrieval System (PPIRS, found at <http://www.ppirs.gov>), which pulls past performance information from the Department of Defense Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS).
- vi) Performance evaluations for the I-BPAs shall be entered into CPARS.
 - 1) The use of CPARS is required by USDA.
 - 2) Evaluations are to be performed by the supervisor of the equipment at each incident, and then the evaluations are sent to the CO for the agreement upon which the evaluation is made.
 - 3) Evaluations are entered into CPARS by AQM personnel on a regular basis at <http://www.cpars.csd.disa.mil/cparsmain.htm> .
 - (1) Separately by incident; OR
 - (2) On a summary basis monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annually.
- f) Terminating and reinstating agreements.
 - v) FAR 49.102 states that a contract terminated for default may be reinstated by mutual agreement where the CO determines that a reinstatement is advantageous to the government. This does not conflict with Part 12, so would be applicable to I-BPAs.
 - vi) For the sake of consistency and to eliminate the confusion of having multiple agreements for the same equipment, reinstating the old agreement is the most practical solution. This also provides a tie to the original solicitation.
 - vii) Intervening modifications should be applied to ensure that the reinstated agreement is consistent with national policy. When the agreement is reinstated, a modification will be issued in VIPR; this modification will incorporate any changes that have been applied to the resource category contract requirements after the termination.
 - viii) The CO may terminate a single resource or multiple resources, leaving the rest of the agreement intact. (Example: A vendor is awarded an agreement for 3 mobile laundry units; an inspection at the incident reveals that one of the units does not meet the requirements. The CO may terminate that resource, leaving the other two units under agreement).
 - ix) The FAR gives the CO authority to reinstate a terminated contract and they will retain this authority in VIPR.

- 1) Provide assistance to regions as requested for policy questions regarding the use of I-BPAs and the use of VIPR.
- 2) Develop and submit recommendations to management regarding the resolution of the issues documented in requests for deviation from national policy as submitted by the regions.
- 3) Approve or disapprove requests from regions for changes to be made to existing I-BPAs found in the VIPR system which cannot be accomplished by a modification issued by the CO.
 - (1) When approved, coordinate with the VIPR team to make the changes in the system.
 - (2) When disapproved, the FESSAA team will provide the requestor with the decision, the justification for the decision, and the region's appeal rights.
 - (a) Appeals must be submitted to WO AQM via a formal letter signed by the Regional director of AQM.
 - (b) Appeals must clearly outline why the region feels that the requested change(s) will not compromise the integrity of the competitive acquisition process.
 - (c) The decision by WO AQM is final.
- 4) Monitor implementation of the dispatch priority process.
- iv) Provide Functional Administrator (FA) for VIPR.
 - 1) Enters users into the system as their requests for access are approved.
 - 2) Once a user is entered into the system, the FA sends an email from the VIPR inbox to the new user with instructions on how to access the system.
 - 3) Disables users in VIPR when notified that they no longer need access.
 - 4) Updates solicitation provisions as appropriate, in conjunction with FAM and AQM management and/or SMEs.
 - (1) Coordinates these changes with the VIPR team, to ensure minimal disruption to the users.

(2) Determines which changes can be delayed until the next release of VIPR.

b) Washington Office Acquisition Management (AQM)

- i) Review draft solicitation templates and provide suggestions for changes.
- ii) Provide final approval of solicitation templates after they have gone through the review process.
- iii) Review and approve the Acquisition Strategy for the solicitations.
- iv) Review regional requests for deviation from national policy and the accompanying recommendation provided by the FESSAA team. Provide their decision in writing. If the decision is not the recommendation provided by the FESSAA team, the rationale for reaching the decision shall be clearly documented.
- v) When conducting Internal Process Plan (IPP) reviews, include an incident procurement component in accordance with the established AQM dashboard/scorecard metrics.

c) Washington Office Fire and Aviation Management (FAM)

- i) Determine equipment types subject to competition in coordination with WO AQM.
- ii) Develop national specifications for each type of equipment identified for competition on the National Solicitation Plan for I-BPAs..
- iii) Delegate technical personnel to act as SMEs to work jointly with the FESSAA team in the development of national standard specifications for solicitation templates.
 - 1) Define minimum equipment specifications to be included in the solicitations.
 - 2) Determine what attributes should be used in the calculation of best value for dispatch priority.
- iv) Approve the final templates from a technical standpoint.
- v) Manage the dispatch priority process. Ensure that all dispatchers are familiar with and understand priority dispatch protocols.

d) Regional Directors of Acquisition Management (AQM)

- i) Designate contracting officers and support personnel in sufficient quantity to accomplish the region's I-BPA program of work.
 - ii) Support all efforts with regard to solicitation, award, and administration of I-BPAs to ensure the national I-BPA policy is adhered to.
 - iii) Monitor, in an administrative support role, the implementation of dispatch priority process.
 - iv) Include an incident procurement component to regional Internal Process Plan (IPP) reviews, in accordance with the established AQM dashboard/scorecard metrics.
 - v) Submit requests to the VIPR inbox at VIPR@fs.fed.us to reassign solicitations in VIPR to a successor Contracting Officer in accordance with FSAR 4G01.603-3(b).
 - vi) Submit appeals of FESSAA decisions to WO AQM via formal letter.
- e) Regional Directors of FAM
- i) Conduct a regional needs analysis for each type of equipment to be solicited each year, and relay those needs in writing to the appropriate AQM staff.
 - ii) Provide the AQM staff with a Government cost estimate for each type of equipment to be solicited each year.
 - iii) Establish and oversee the process for periodic evaluation of vendor qualifications. Identify the following:
 - 1) The standard at which the review will be conducted; e.g., random samples, 100%, etc.
 - 2) The format by which data from the review will be documented. Exhibit N found in each solicitation template and/or agreement is the recommended format.
 - 3) The frequency and timing of reviews.
 - 4) Maintenance of review records.
 - 5) The process to monitor effectiveness of reviews.

- 6) The process for notifying the Contracting Officer of vendors with employee(s) who do not meet training and qualification requirements.
- iv) Determine the need for a preseason equipment inspection program; if adopted:
 - 1) Develop and oversee the process.
 - 2) Provide information to the CO describing how and when inspections will be conducted to include in the solicitation.
- v) Manage the dispatch priority process and other elements of business needs related to competitive I-BPAs and best value. Ensure that all dispatchers are familiar with and understand priority dispatch protocols.
- vi) Ensure that personnel who oversee equipment are trained on how to evaluate contractor performance. Also, ensure that performance evaluations are completed for contracted equipment resources after each incident assignment.
- f) Regional AQM incident liaisons.
 - i) Act as the regional spokesperson regarding incident procurement to support national policy with regard to solicitation, award, and administration of I-BPAs.
 - ii) Refer questions regarding the VIPR system to the VIPR Helpdesk.
 - iii) Submit questions regarding business processes and policy to the FESSAA team via the VIPR inbox at VIPR@fs.fed.us.
 - iv) Provide a network between the national and field levels to share information. Disseminate I-BPA policies, process changes, system development and use from the WO to regional stakeholders and field/user groups (AQM, FAM, Incident Business, Finance, vendors, interagency partners) that are affected by policy and systems.
 - v) Provide field perspective of all stakeholders in their region regarding national policy and processes. Provide input into decisions regarding system changes and policy implementation.
- g) Contracting Officers
 - i) Follow all national policies with regard to solicitation, award, and administration of I-BPAs.

- ii) Conduct and document market research prior to the issuance of solicitations each year, to determine the appropriate set-aside(s) for the solicitations. This documentation shall be uploaded into VIPR for each solicitation.
- iii) Refer questions regarding the VIPR system to the VIPR Helpdesk.
- iv) Submit questions regarding business processes and policy to the FESSAA team via the VIPR inbox at VIPR@fs.fed.us.
- v) Assign COA's to assist them with solicitation, evaluation, award, and administration of I-BPAs in VIPR.
- vi) Coordinate with FESSAA on all responses and/or corrective action for protests and disputes regarding I-BPAs to ensure that national policy is considered.
- vii) Publish DPLs, agreements, and other reports from the VIPR system in a timely manner.
- viii) Re-publish DPLs and agreements in a timely manner as changes are made to agreements that will affect those documents.
- ix) Process rollover modifications for subsequent agreement years prior to the anniversary of the award date.
- x) Communicate to the dispatch community as appropriate when DPLs are published or re-published.
- xi) Communicate with vendors and internal customers to resolve questions and inquiries regarding the VIPR system and solicitations.
- xii) Enter basic award information into FPDS-NG for each agreement within 3 days of award; update these records as appropriate on a monthly basis using payment information provided by the ASC Incident Finance Branch (found at <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/incident/policy/index.php>)
- xiii) Associate the appropriate vendor codes with each agreement in AVID (see 4G13.303-72(i)).
- xiv) For novation and change-of-name agreements, ensure the paperwork required by FAR 42.12 is fully executed before accomplished in VIPR.
 - 1) For a novation where the purchasing vendor is already in VIPR, the CO can accomplish the novation by issuing a novation modification.

The novation paperwork shall be uploaded to the agreement in VIPR as an attachment.

- 2) For a novation where the purchasing vendor is not in VIPR, request the novation by sending an email to VIPR@fs.fed.us with the following information:
 - (1) Current vendor's name and DUNS number
 - (2) Solicitation number
 - (3) Agreement number
 - (4) New (purchasing) vendor's name, DUNS number, and email address
 - (5) An electronic (scanned) copy of the signed novation document(s)

4G13.303-72 – Virtual Incident Procurement (VIPR)

- a) Getting access to VIPR
 - i) Complete the System Access Authorization Request (SAAR) found on the FS intranet at <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqm/incident/vipr/training.php> ; sign the form and the rules of behavior attached to the form.
 - ii) Obtain supervisor's signature on the form and rules of behavior.
 - iii) Submit the form to the VIPR Information System Security Officer (ISSO) whose name appears on the form by faxing, or scanning the signed form and sending via email.
 - iv) After approval by the VIPR ISSO, the VIPR Functional Administrator is responsible for entering users into the system.
 - v) Once access is granted, the user will receive an email with instructions on how to log into the system.
- b) Roles in VIPR
 - i) Contracting Officer – the CO will have read and write access to the solicitations that they have created and those to which they have been reassigned. The CO will have read and limited write access to solicitations to which they have been granted Contracting Officer Assistant (COA) access by another CO. Only COs have the ability to assign COAs to the solicitations they own.
 - ii) Contracting Officer Assistant (COA) – COAs will have read and limited write access to those solicitations to which they have been granted access by a CO. COAs can perform the same tasks as COs, EXCEPT:

- 1) They cannot create solicitations
 - 2) They cannot sign agreements or modifications
 - 3) They cannot assign or remove COAs from solicitations
- iii) Read Only Helpdesk – this role is reserved for the VIPR Helpdesk personnel. This allows them read access to all solicitations contained in VIPR. These users have no write access to VIPR.
- iv) Functional Administrator (FA) – this role is limited to FESSAA and the VIPR Core team. These users have read and write access to the VIPR Administration module; access to solicitations in the VIPR CO Module is limited to those solicitations to which the FA has been granted COA access.
- v) National Reports Administrator – this role is limited to FESSAA and the VIPR Core team. This role allows access to VIPR data for reporting and analysis purposes at the regional and national levels. This role does not have write access to any solicitations in VIPR.
- c) A level 2 eAuthentication username and password is required to log into VIPR. For instructions on creating an eAuthentication account, go to <http://www.eauth.egov.usda.gov/eauthCreateAccount.html> .
- d) VIPR is the System of Record (SOR) for I-BPAs. As such, all pertinent contract documents and records shall be uploaded into the system. See FAR 4.803 for a list of the types of information/documents that are normally contained in a contract file.
- e) In accordance with FAR 4.5, a vendor's use of their Level 2 eAuthentication ID and password constitutes an electronic signature and is binding.
- f) When a CO clicks on *Finalize* or *Sign* in VIPR, the system will display a window that says "I agree that by clicking 'OK' I am creating an agreement with this vendor" or "I agree that by clicking 'OK' I am signing this modification." This coupled with the CO's eAuthentication ID and password used to access VIPR, constitute the CO's electronic signature on the agreement and modification documents.
- g) After awarding an agreement in VIPR, the system will display basic information for the CO to use to create an award report in FPDS-NG. VIPR also has an option to display the FPDS-NG information for all awards under a solicitation.

- h) Agreements awarded in VIPR will be published by AQM personnel via VIPR to <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/vipragreements.php> for the use of IMT, Interagency, and/or ASC personnel. The CO will publish the agreements from VIPR within 10 days after signing the last award for a solicitation.
- i) DPL's will be published by AQM personnel via VIPR to <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/dispatch.php> for dispatchers' use. The DPLs will be published from VIPR within 10 days after signing the last award for a solicitation. If a region chooses to conduct preseason inspections, the DPLs should not be made available until all inspections are complete.
- j) VIPR generates 90% reports for use by Incident procurement and Contracting Officers to determine rates when hiring resources under incident-only agreements for equipment categories subject to competition per the national solicitation plan. See the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook (IIBM), Chapter 20, Section 24.3-3 and Exhibit 01 for additional guidance and information. The 90% reports will be published by AQM personnel via VIPR to <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/viprreports.php> within 10 days after signing the last award for a solicitation.
- k) After awarding agreements in VIPR, AQM personnel should then associate a Vendor ID code with each agreement through the use of an AQM Systems tool known as AVID. This tool is then used by ASC Incident Finance to assist in making payments to vendors, by providing the VID associated with the agreements. AVID will remain in use until such time as the Forest Service implements a new financial system in which payments and vendor records are not based on a vendor's Taxpayer Identification Number (TIN).
 - i) AVID is found by going to <http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/aqms/> and entering the user's eAuthentication ID and password, then selecting AVID from the list.
 - ii) Follow the instructions found on the home page and via the Help link to obtain a list of agreements for the contracting office, and look up and associate a valid VID to each agreement.
 - iii) Access to AVID is granted only for authenticated AQM personnel. If a user finds they do not have access to the tool, they should contact the AQM Systems Helpdesk at 970-295-5800 or via email at *pdl wo ops aqm systems*.
- l) Agreements may be extended by the CO through the use of the Extend Agreement modification in VIPR. Agreements cannot be extended for more than one year past the original agreement end date.
- m) After award of an agreement, the following information may NOT be changed:

- 1) Dispatch Center -- the CO shall terminate the resource with the incorrect dispatch center, The vendor will then be free to offer the equipment for an incident-only EERA should the local DPL be exhausted
- 2) Resource type; for example, if a vendor is awarded an agreement for a type II engine but it is later determined that they actually have a type III engine, they cannot change the resource type.
 - (1) The vendor can adjust their equipment to meet the requirements for the resource category type on their agreement, OR
 - (2) Through a modification that the CO creates, the vendor can replace the equipment with equipment that meets the requirements, but it **MUST** still be the same resource category type.
- 3) Business status; for example, if a vendor is Historically Underutilized Business Zone (HUBZone) certified at time of award and later loses that certification, they will remain as a HUBZone throughout the life of their agreement.

4G13.303-73 – Use of Dispatch Priority Lists (DPLs)

- a) DPLs will be published by AQM personnel via VIPR to the following Web site: <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/dispatch.php> . DPLs will be published by the CO from VIPR within 10 days after signing the last award for a solicitation. If a region chooses to conduct preseason inspections, the DPLs should not be made available until all inspections are complete.
- b) Tied scores between vendors are resolved by applying the Labor Surplus Area (LSA) status that was provided by the vendors.
 - i) A vendor whose principal place of business is located in an LSA will be placed on the DPL above a vendor whose business is not located within an LSA.
 - ii) If a tie still exists after applying the LSA status, VIPR will use a random programmatic function to determine the DPL order.
 - iii) If the random function is used, the placement on the DPL will remain the same when the DPLs are regenerated until a change is made to an agreement that will affect their placement on the DPL.
- c) When dispatching equipment, dispatchers will begin at the top of the DPL

- i) If the first vendor on the list cannot be reached, is not available, or cannot meet the requirements of the request, the dispatcher will then move to the next vendor on the list.

This will continue until the dispatcher finds a vendor who can meet the requirements of the order. The Host Dispatch Center must exhaust all available resources on their DPL prior to placing requests outside of their zone or requesting incident-only EERAs.

- ii) See the *National Interagency Standard Operating Guidelines for Contracted Resources* (a link to this document can be found at <http://www.fs.fed.us/business/incident/dispatch.php>) for more information.
- d) DPLs are to be used before all other private resources not under agreement, with the following exceptions:
 - i) Agency and cooperator-owned equipment may be used before using the DPL.
 - ii) When obtaining resources for initial attack.
 - iii) In the case of tribal preference within a reservation jurisdiction.
 - e) Equipment that has been awarded on a competitive I-BPA shall be given priority to remain on the incident over resources with incident-only EERAs, unless the Incident Commander determines it necessary to deviate based on a specific incident need or objective.
 - f) Holding contract resources in reserve will not be done unless ordered and placed in pay status. When the immediate need for the resources is fulfilled, they will be released from the incident.
 - g) Parity among small business programs. All I-BPAs are set aside for small business, and I-BPAs awarded prior to 2010 contained a provision where preference could be provided to vendors certified in other small business programs (HUBZone; Service-Disabled, Veteran-Owned Small Business (SDVOSB); and 8(a)). Depending on how the solicitation was set aside, the provision gave preference to these vendors before other small businesses both for award and for ranking on the dispatch priority list (DPL). For example, if a solicitation was set aside for small business, HUBZone, and SDVOSB, first preference was given to HUBZone vendors, then SDVOSB vendors, and then other small businesses.

OMB Memorandum M-09-23, dated July 10, 2009, affirmed that Small Business Administration (SBA) regulations provide for parity among all small business programs, therefore, I-BPAs awarded in 2010 and beyond will treat

Exhibit 1 – National Template Deviation Form

**Forest Service – Acquisition Management
Request for Approval of Deviation from National Solicitation Templates
In support of Incident Procurement**

Acquisition Management (AQM) and Fire and Aviation Management (F&AM) personnel jointly develop and have the opportunity to provide input into the development of the national solicitation templates. It is expected that this process will minimize the need for deviations after the templates have been published. However, there may be unanticipated events that require deviations to the templates. Requests for deviation must be submitted through this form to the Fire Equipment, Services, & Supply Acquisition Analysis (FESSAA) Team at VIPR@fs.fed.us.

All submissions must have the concurrence of both the AQM and FAM Regional Director. FESSAA will coordinate within AQM or FAM for review and recommendation. Decisions will be made by the Assistant Director, NIFC Operations and the Assistant Director, AQM Operations. If the recommendation is approved, the decision will include implementation steps.

Date Submitted:	Name (submitted by)
Unit:	
Phone:	Email:
Describe the deviation request	
Describe the circumstance that necessitates the deviation:	

Is the scope of the requested deviation National or Local?

National

☐

Local

☐

Please Explain

Concurred by:
Director, AQM

Date:

Concurred by:
Director, FAM

Date:

Decision:

Denied []

Approved []

Signature:
Assistant Director,
Operations, AQM

Date:

Signature:
Assistant Director, NI
Operations, FAM

Date:

Exhibit 2 – DPL Ranking Flowcharts pre- and post-2010

Previous I-BPA Award/DPL Ranking Flow Chart (Used Prior to 2010)

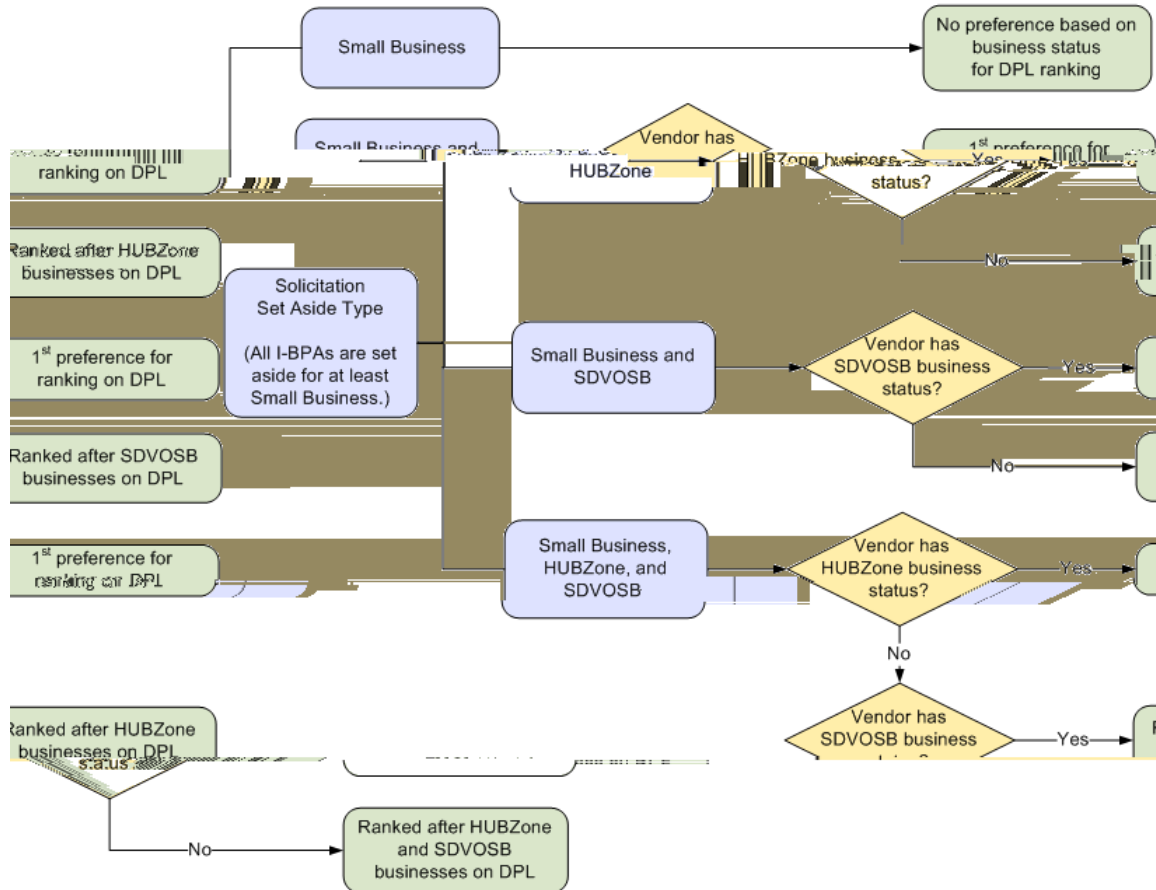


Exhibit 2, continued

New I-BPA Award/DPL Ranking Flow Chart (Used after 2009)

